

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested on the basis of the following particulars:

In the claims

Claim 1 is amended to recite a filtration film mounted at an upper periphery of said guard means to filtrate the liquid for preventing said liquid hitting against said guard means from splashing-back. Support is found in the specification at lines 11-18 of page 5, which notes that "by using the principle of filtration film, the characteristics of liquid molecules (i.e., easy-to-enter and hard-to-exit) and rebound of the liquid molecules in the form of micro-molecule to be carried away by an air-extracting device in the developing apparatus as a result of a secondary hit which reduces the volume and acting force of the splashing-back developer if any, the possibility of the developer splashing back to the substrate 20 after hitting against the guard means 40 is reduced."

Claim 5 is amended in view of the amendment to claim 1, to recite that the filtration film includes a sponge or a stainless steel web.

New claim 15 is added, reciting that the filtration film has a thickness in the range of from 1 mm to 20 mm. Support is found at lines 10-11 of page 5.

Rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), 103(a)

Claims 1-3 and 6 presently stand rejected as being anticipated by Nishimura (JP 10-034054), and claims 4 and 5 are rejected as being unpatentable over Nishimura. These rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

It is respectfully submitted that Nishimura fails to disclose or suggest a filtration film to filtrate liquid for preventing the liquid hitting against the guard means from splashing-back.

Nishimura discloses the formation of plural projection parts 16a formed on an inside surface of a spin cup 16, whereby an adhering surface is increased. However, this does not constitute any teaching or suggestion of any filtration film, since by reference to the figure accompanying the English language abstract of Nishimura, as well as the description, the plural projection parts 16a formed on the inside surface of the spin cup 16 merely define a roughened surface of the inside surface of the spin cup 16, and not a filtration film.

As disclosed in Nishimura, the roughened surface is a part of the spin cup 16. However, for the present invention, the filtration film is mounted at the upper periphery of the guard means to filtrate the liquid. By the principle of filtration film, the liquid molecules easily enter, but do not easily exit, the filtration film, and thus are temporarily absorbed in the filtration film and then carried away by the air-extracting device.

Therefore, the rebound of liquid molecules is correspondingly reduced. A roughened surface can not achieve the filtration effect, because the roughen surface just divides liquid particles into smaller ones but can not absorb the smaller ones into it. In contrast, the filtration film of the present film can absorb the liquid molecules and small droplets and further filtrate them. Accordingly, the filtration effect with little rebound can not be obtained by the roughened surface of Nishimura alone.

Thus, Nishimura's arrangement does not achieve, disclose, or suggest the filtration effect of the present invention.

Therefore, Nishimura does not anticipate, or form a *prima facie* case of obviousness of, claim 1 because Nishimura does not disclose or suggest each and every element set forth in claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, along with claims 2-6 and 15 which depend from claim 1, are allowable over the cited references, and withdrawal of these rejections is requested.

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New claim 15

New claim 15 is added. it is respectfully submitted that claim 15 recites material which is novel and non-obvious in view of the prior art of record, and it is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 15 is fully patentable over all the references of record.

More particularly, claim 15 recites that the filtration film has a thickness in the range of from 1 mm to 20 mm. Since Nishimura does not disclose or suggest a filtration film, Nishimura cannot disclose or suggest a range of thickness of the film

Conclusion

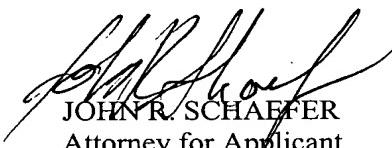
In view of the amendments to the claims, and in further view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is requested that claims 1-6 and 15 be allowed and the application be passed to issue.

If any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephone or facsimile communication with the Applicant's attorney, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the numbers shown.

Respectfully submitted,

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